

SOME COMMENTS ON CUBA BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

April 17, 1961 - February 26, 1963

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THE LITERATURE OF THE LOST RIVER REGION

Future Freedom in Cuba

Speech at Houston, Texas, February 26, 1962

... The hemisphere is, again, unanimous that the object must be to return the Cuban people, under free leadership, to their rightful place in the American family. And that policies and actions, taken by many countries throughout the Free World, are being directed to that necessary result.

Statement on January 25, 1962

We look forward to the day when a free and progressive government will flourish in Habana, and the Cuban people can join with us in the common undertakings of the Hemisphere.

Statement on April 17, 1961

There is no secret about the sympathy of the American people for those who wish to be free, whether in distant parts of the world or in our own neighborhood.

Military Threat from Cuba

Speech at Los Angeles, February 13, 1963

Turning to Cuba, President Kennedy said again at his press conference last week that we are reasonably certain that the offensive weapons deployed there under a blanket of secrecy have now been removed. We cannot, of course, be absolutely certain that none remains, in the absence of on-the-spot inspection. But we do not believe that forces now in Cuba represent a serious military threat to the security of this country or of our neighbors. Much of the information on which this judgment is based was set forth in detail last week by Secretary of Defense McNamara. In the background is the fact which both sides fully understand -- that the armed forces of the United States and its neighbors in the hemisphere will insure that arms in Cuba will not be used outside Cuba.

At the same time, certain Soviet troops remain in Cuba. As we have said before, we in the Western Hemisphere cannot accept as normal any Soviet military presence in this hemisphere. The authorities in Moscow and Havana must recognize that Soviet military elements

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in Cuba do not insure the peace of Cuba but poison the atmosphere and increase the dangers. The sooner this source of potential trouble is eliminated, the better for everyone concerned.

Cuba will not become a base for offensive military operations against other countries of this hemisphere for the simple reason that it will not be permitted to play that role.

Communist subversion in Latin America, whether connected with Cuba or not, is being met by the individual and joint actions of the American states.

The continuing economic, psychological and political isolation of the Cuban regime not only protects others from this source of infection but brings home to the people of Cuba that there is no future along the Marxist-Leninist path.

Having failed in the fifties to prevent the establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba, the United States and its hemispheric partners now face the more difficult problem of finding a cure. The hemisphere is unanimous that the present regime in Cuba is incompatible with the inter-American system and that the policy of the hemisphere must be directed toward the return of a free Cuba to the American family of nations. Precise steps to

give

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Television Report on November 28, 1962

I think that the sudden appearance in Cuba of these medium-range ballistic missiles and these light jet bombers gave an enormous impetus to a development which had been going on for a year or two in the hemisphere--that is, growing concern about what Cuba meant to the rest of the hemisphere. And we were really not surprised, but we were deeply gratified, to see the immediate unification of the hemisphere with unanimity on the nature of this threat and the necessity that it be removed.

I think that the unanimity in the OAS and in NATO had some bearing on what Moscow's decisions turned out to be in this situation. Had there been disunity, and had we fallen to quarreling among ourselves, I think the results might have been quite different. I think it gives us all some confidence for the future.

Now I don't want to mislead you on that, because we have cautioned our friends from drawing too many conclusions from the Cuban experience. The Soviet Union remains a great power. There were special circumstances in Cuba which are not necessarily present in other parts

of

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of the world. It would be, I think, wrong to say that, because this situation in Cuba came out the way it did, therefore a lot of other questions are going suddenly to take a new shape and new form in fundamental respects. I do think that this experience has caused an element of caution on all sides, in Moscow as well as elsewhere--that men have had to look practically at the fact that nuclear war is a real danger and not just a theoretical danger.

Well, I think it's very important that they understand that, when we talk about vital interests--all of us in the free world--when we talk about these great issues of war and peace, this is serious talk. And I think they do understand that most of the time. Because it's so easy for democracies to be underestimated. We normally do a lot more than we're willing to say in advance that we'll do. And also, when you have a great sprawling democracy that is debating within itself all the time, as we are--we quarrel a good deal with each other, and we have an alliance of democracies, and there are times when it appears that, you know, we're not getting along very well together. The one think that the outsiders must understand is that, on the great underlying issues of war and peace, we are united and firm and determined, and this is the signal we must get across; and I think

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think there's good prospect that after this Cuban affair-- that these signals can go across.

Speech in New York on November 20, 1962

Nevertheless, it is also obvious, as we have seen in recent weeks, that modern weapons systems are themselves a source of high tension and that we must make an urgent and earnest effort to bring the arms race under control and to try to turn it downward if we possibly can.

In their exchange of messages, both Chairman Khrushchev and President Kennedy expressed the hope that a settlement of the Cuban crisis would be followed by other agreed measures to lessen the danger of thermonuclear war. In his letter, President Kennedy said:

"Mr. Chairman, both of our countries have great unfinished tasks, and I know that your people as well as those of the United States can ask for nothing better than to pursue them free from the fear of war. Modern science and technology have given us the possibility of making labor fruitful beyond anything that could have been dreamed a few decades ago.

"I agree with you, that we must devote urgent attention to the problem of disarmament, as it relates to the whole world and also to critical areas, perhaps now, as we step back from danger, we can together make real progress in this vital field.

"I think we should give priority to questions relating to the proliferation of nuclear weapons", the President said, "on earth and in outer space and to the great effort for a

nuclear

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nuclear test ban. But we should also work hard to see if woder measures of disarmament can be agreed and put into operation at an early date. The United States Government will be prepared to discuss these questions urgently, and in a constructive spirit, at Geneva or elsewhere."

.....In the Cuban crisis Chairman Khrushchev said that he was prepared to agree that representatives of the United Nations should verify the dismantling of the Soviet Union's offensive weapons in Cuba. But in the course of the brass tacks of negotiation, it has become evident that at least Mr. Castro's interpretation of such verification falls far short thus far of what others could in prudence accept as an adequate verification of a disarmament agreement.

OAS Speech on October 23, 1962

Three weeks ago today, I met with your Foreign Ministers to consider the serious, new situation created by the Soviet military build-up in Cuba. Most of you participated in that meeting. You will recall the discussion which took place culminating in a consensus on many important aspects of the problem expressed in the final communique. In that document the Foreign Ministers unanimously stated that the efforts of the Sino-Soviet bloc to convert the island of Cuba into an armed base for Communist penetration of the Americas was the most urgent

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urgent problem confronting the Hemisphere. They also found that the organs of our regional system which have responsibilities to deal with the situation created by the Communist regime in Cuba, should intensify their efforts and should stand in readiness to consider what measures, beyond those already authorized, might be required. And the Foreign Ministers also observed that it was desirable to intensify surveillance of arms deliveries to Cuba in order to prevent the secret accumulation in the island of arms that can be used for offensive purposes against the Hemisphere.

When the Foreign Ministers prepared the communique, there was no indication that the arms build-up was taking on an offensive character. Today we have incontrovertible evidence that despite repeated warnings the Castro regime is permitting the establishment of medium and intermediate range missile bases on Cuban territory by the Soviet Union. The facts are clear and incontrovertible and were set forth by the President of the United States in his statement last evening. And these facts have been, of course, also conveyed to you by other means directly and to your Governments. These facts demonstrate that the USSR is making a major military investment in Cuba with advanced weapons systems with substantial offensive capability.

What

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What do these facts mean to the independent nations of this Hemisphere? Their significance is immediate, direct and perhaps fateful to the maintenance of that independence. The principal implications are:

First:

The Communist regime in Cuba with the complicity of its Soviet mentors has deceived the Hemisphere, under the cloak of secrecy and with loud protestations of arming for self-defense, in allowing an extracontinental power, bent on destruction of the national independence, and democratic aspirations of all our peoples, to establish an offensive military foothold in the heart of the Hemisphere. I will not go into a detailed history of this partnership in deceit. Sufficient to recall that President Dorticos in his speech before the United Nations General Assembly on October 8 said: "We shall continue to strengthen our military defense, to defend ourselves, not to attack anyone." The Soviet Government on its part said in an official statement on September 12: "The armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes." The statement added that Soviet rockets are so powerful that "there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union." And last week the Soviet Foreign Minister in his talks with President Kennedy in the White House said that Soviet assistance to Cuba

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"pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba," that "training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments was by no means offensive," and that "if it were otherwise, the Soviet Government would never become involved in rendering such assistance."

Second:

This offensive capability is of such a nature that it can reach into the far corners of our Hemisphere with its destructive force. These new weapons arriving in Cuba are not only directed against the United States. Let there be no misunderstanding. There are other strategic targets in this Hemisphere - in your countries - which they can devastate with their lethal loads. The missile sites in being for medium range ballistic are capable of carrying nuclear warheads as far west as Mexico City, as far south as the Panama Canal or Caracas, and as far north as Washington, D. C. The new sites for intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba will be able to carry mass destruction to most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere. In the face of this rapid build-up, no country of this Hemisphere can feel secure, either from direct attack or from persistent blackmail.

Third:

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Third:

This new Soviet intervention means a further tightening of the enslavement of the Cuban people by the Soviet power to which the Castro regime has surrendered the Cuban national heritage. It signifies for the rest of the Hemisphere a vast strengthening of the offensive capability of the Communist system which talks of peaceful coexistence by which it appears to mean softening for subjugation, which uses the slogan of national liberation to crush every legitimate national aspiration.

Fourth:

The Soviet intervention in this Hemisphere with major offensive weapons challenges as never before the determination of the American Governments to carry out Hemispheric commitments solemnly assumed in inter-American treaties and resolutions for the defense of the peace and security of the nations of this Hemisphere against extracontinental aggression or intervention. Here again, I hardly need to review them because they are familiar to us all. Beginning with the Rio Treaty in 1947, and culminating in the decisions of the Foreign Ministers in Punta del Este and in their communique issued here this month, there has been a mounting conviction on the part of the American peoples and their

Governments

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Governments, that the growing intervention of the international Communist movement in this Hemisphere must stop and that the individual and collective means available within the regional system should be brought to bear as necessary to accomplish this objective.

The task before us is to meet this new phase of Soviet aggressive intervention in this Hemisphere. As free nations, we must act in defense of our national independence and democratic heritage. We must confront and overcome the challenge now presented in Cuba. In doing so, we must tailor our response, individually and collectively, to the degree and direction of the threat, be firm in our convictions, and resolute and united in our actions.

In these circumstances the United States Government has sought a policy which would accomplish our purposes with the appropriate and necessary use of force and with necessary opportunity to remove this grave threat by means other than general war.

The President has therefore stated that it is necessary immediately to prevent the arrival of additional offensive military weapons in Cuba, to seek promptly to arrest further work on the offensive capacity being developed in Cuba and to require that all these offensive weapons be withdrawn or eliminated before we can consider that this new threat to the peace of the Hemisphere will have been adequately dealt with.

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The United States Government, therefore, strongly urges that the Governments of this Hemisphere take the actions necessary under the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance to achieve these objectives.

As an initial measure, which is primarily the responsibility of this Hemisphere and of special concern to it, the United States believes that we should establish a strict quarantine to prevent further offensive military equipment from reaching Cuba. The immediate character of the nuclear military threat to our peoples from these bases in Cuba is such that we cannot tolerate any further opportunity to add to their capacity. To this end, the United States has requested this urgent meeting of the Council to convoke the Organ of Consultation under Article 6 of the Rio Treaty to deal with this new situation. We are convinced that the evidence presented can leave no doubt that the danger is present and real. Furthermore, because of the urgency of the situation, we believe that the Council, acting provisionally as Organ of Consultation, should immediately take the steps which are necessary at this time.

For these purposes my Government has prepared two draft Resolutions, the texts of which have been circulated. The first is a procedural Resolution by which the Council would decide to convoke the Organ of Consultation under the

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the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and would also decide to act provisionally, as that Organ in accordance with Article 12 of that Treaty. The second, more substantive Resolution, is one which would be formally considered by the Council, once it has approved the first and has constituted itself as the Organ of Consultation. Under this second Resolution, the Organ of Consultation would call for the immediate dismantling and withdrawal from Cuba of all missiles and other weapons of offensive capability and would recommend, though not seek to compel, the member states of the OAS to take the measures necessary to ensure that this build-up does not continue to receive additional offensive weapons, to prevent the offensive capacity already acquired by the Castro regime from being used to destroy the peace and the security of the Hemisphere.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to say a word about the action being taken simultaneously in the Security Council of the United Nations. The threat is to our Hemisphere and we have the primary responsibility and duty to act as we are now doing as a Hemisphere. But the threat originates from outside the Hemisphere and it is appropriate that the extracontinental power which challenges our inter-American commitments and our deliberations must also be dealt with in that forum in which

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he participates. It is therefore fitting in this case that the Security Council of the United Nations be requested to call upon this Member to refrain from his aggressive actions against us and to seek to enforce upon him its decisions.

Meanwhile, without awaiting the outcome of the United Nations approach we must ensure that our Hemisphere is effectively quarantined against any further additions to Soviet offensive nuclear military power in our midst.

All the world will be watching how wisely, how resolutely, how unitedly this Council acts to meet a challenge within our Hemisphere and to our own interest. May I add that crucial in this present situation will be the judgment of others, some of them far away, about the unity and determination of the nations of this Hemisphere. The President made it clear last evening that we should prefer to resolve this problem through peace. But if others make a grave mistake the danger will be greatly increased. And therefore, gentlemen, I am deeply convinced that the unanimity of this Hemisphere is directly related to the opportunity to remove this threat within the limits of force which are now being employed. For the future of peace and freedom of the world has never before been so dependent upon the Inter-American System as it is today.

Military Threat from Cuba

Statement on December 10, 1962 (Surveillance)

The President in his November 20 press conference indicated that in the absence of ..., inspection, the nations of the Hemisphere would have to use other means to give themselves such assurances as possible.

Excluding Castro from Free World Activities

Press Briefing at Houston, Texas, February 26, 1963

The question of other steps with regard to Cuba involves a lot of action by a great many governments, both in the hemisphere and outside, to underline that Cuba must not become a source of infection for the hemisphere, to underline that Castro and Castroism will not be accepted as a part of the hemispheric system, that Marxist-Leninism must be eliminated from this hemisphere, that normal relations between the regime in Cuba and its neighbors cannot be expected. The reduction, for example, in shipping and trade has been going on to such a point that both shipping and trade with the free world during 1963 will be the smallest fraction of what it had been, and it will be of insignificant importance.

Both individual and joint action in the hemisphere by governments with respect to subversive threats is now being taken, and that we are, of course, as the President has indicated, very much interested in the continued outmovement of these Soviet forces.

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Excluding Castro from Free World Activities

In October, and November, the missiles and bombers were removed; certain equipment was removed at that time. It has been indicated that several thousand additional Soviet forces will be removed between now and the middle of March. So we are watching all that with very great concern.

But this presence in the hemisphere cannot be accepted as a matter of policy by the hemisphere, and steps will be taken to underline that, and to give it force and effect.

News Briefing at Los Angeles on February 13, 1963

The isolation of Cuba that is growing, economically, psychologically, politically, is part of the general campaign to make it clear that Cuba is not going to be permitted to be a base for aggression in this Hemisphere, that Castroism is not an answer to the understandable demands of the people of the Hemisphere for economic and social advancement, and that this intrusion of this Hemisphere from out cannot be accepted by the Hemisphere as an object of policy.

Press

Excluding Cuba from Free World Activities

states friendly to the U.S. and to the objectives of the free world the need to examine their trade policies and the extent of their commerce with the Castro-Communist Government of Cuba.

Statement on January 25, 1962

We must now make the policy decision to exclude the Castro regime from participation in the organs and bodies of the Inter-American system.

Cuban Subversion

Speech at Houston Texas, Tuesday, February 26, 1963

The Inter-American system is now being challenged by the penetration of Cuba by Marxist-Leninism and by subversive threats against Latin America. Having failed in the fifties to prevent the betrayal of the Cuban people to communism by their own false prophets, the United States and its hemispheric allies now face the more difficult task of finding a cure. Fortunately, there is unanimity in the hemisphere on the most crucial matters. A Marxist-Leninist regime is incompatible with the commitments of the hemisphere and with the obligations of Cuba itself as a state. Cuba will not be permitted to use any of its arms outside Cuba. A Soviet military presence on that island cannot be accepted. Attempts to stimulate subversive action in other countries are being met by the individual and joint action of the members of the Inter-American system. Castro is learning that the path upon which he has embarked has no future for himself or the Cuban people, except a future of increasing misery and frustration, while the remainder of the hemisphere is clear that their own well-being can best be achieved

achieved through free institutions and the vigorous pursuit of economic and social development as free men. The hemisphere is, again, unanimous that the object must be to return the Cuban people, under free leadership, to their rightful place in the American family. And that policies and actions, taken by many countries throughout the Free World, are being directed to that necessary result.

Interview - Tuesday, February 5, 1963

The infiltration of this Hemisphere from Cuba or from outside the Hemisphere is a violation not only of our traditional attitude, summed up as the Monroe Doctrine, but more specifically and importantly, a violation of the treaties of the Hemisphere to which all the countries of this Hemisphere have subscribed. These treaties, by the way, are still binding on Cuba because Cuba is a signatory and has not taken steps to denounce those treaties or relieve itself of the treaty obligations.

I would say, however, that in the last several months the stature of Castro in the Hemisphere has been greatly reduced. Much of the "Democratic Left," so-called, has abandoned Castro. His support tends now to be concentrated, in country after country, in the hands of the hard core Communist apparatus.

Now, this

Cuban Subversion

Now, this doesn't mean that the notion of economic and social revolution in the Hemisphere has been set aside; there still is a very widespread and understandable demand for change in the economic and social fields. For a time, much of that leadership was ascribed to Castro in the early stages of his own revolution in Cuba. But there has been recognition that Castro betrayed that revolution and turned it into the hands of the Communists.

We have no intelligence which would substantiate that there has yet been any shipment of arms or other military equipment from Cuba to subversive forces in Latin America. We, and other Governments of the Hemisphere, continue to carefully watch this possible means of subversion. However, there is no doubt that other subversive activities by the Cuban Government are going on -- through their few remaining Embassies in Latin America, by incitement over the powerful Radio Havana, through the training of agents in the techniques of terrorism, sabotage and propaganda, as well as other means. The entire Hemisphere must be alert to isolate Cuba and to improve its vigilance against these types of penetration.

Cuban Subversion

Interview on January 21, 1963

The question of peace in the Caribbean is largely a question of the behavior of Cuba. The President has said that if Cuba does not become a base for aggression, that he will not initiate or permit aggression in the Caribbean. But this also means, as he said, that we will not abandon other measures direct to insuring that Cuba not be a source of infection for the rest of the Hemisphere.

The attitude of the rest of the Hemisphere, expressed at Punta del Este, is that the invasion of this Hemisphere by Marxist-Leninist regime is unacceptable to the Hemisphere.

Statement on September 30, 1962

The President has made it very clear that whatever arms are in Cuba will stay in Cuba, and that there will be no effort by Castro to move these arms into other countries.

Cuban Subversion

Statement on February 2, 1962

(reporting on the Punta del Este meeting):

We established special machinery within the OAS to recommend joint action that can block Communist subversive activities before they reach the level of insurrection and guerrilla war.

Statement on January 25, 1962

We must set in motion a series of individual and communal acts of defense against the various forms of political and indirect aggression mounted against this Hemisphere. The acts of political aggression which the Castro regime is committing have an immediate and direct impact in the general Caribbean area near the focus of infection.

Statement on June 29, 1961

We must do everything we can to insure that Cuba is not . . exploited as a base for the future penetration of forces and elements from outside the Hemisphere into other countries of this Hemisphere.

Cuban Subversion

Statement on April 17, 1961

**We shall work together with other governments of
this Hemisphere to meet efforts by this conspiracy to
extend its penetration.**

Withdrawal of Soviet Troops

Interview on February 5, 1963

We did not have a flat commitment from Mr. Khruschev that he would remove all Soviet military personnel. There was an indication, as the President said on November 20, that troops which were there in connection with the missiles would be withdrawn in due course. However, the very presence of Soviet military elements in this Hemisphere is something we cannot accept as normal; the presence of Soviet military elements there must be considered a very high priority problem for us and the inter-American system.

Further, if we look at the declaration of war which Castro has repeated this year about revolutions in the Hemisphere, the combination of that, the nature of the regime, and the presence of Soviet military elements means this is the kind of intrusion which must be and has to be against the policy of the United States and the entire Hemisphere.

Television Program on January 27, 1963

The Soviet military aid program and buildup in Cuba started last July. That reached a crescendo, of course, with the missiles and the bombers which were dealt with in October and early November. There remains a substantial Soviet military presence in Cuba.

As the President indicated in his November 20 press conference,

there

Withdrawal of Soviet Troops

there had been some indication from the Soviet Union that those forces that were there for the servicing and protection of those missiles would be removed in due course. We have seen some out-traffic of Soviet military personnel in recent weeks, but we are very much interested in the continuation of that out-traffic.

There are in Cuba at the present time, for example, four relatively small Soviet combat groups, heavily armed, whose presence there is, I think, a matter of some real concern. But the underlying factor is that this hemisphere, including the United States, does not look upon a Soviet military presence in Cuba as a normal condition. It must be our policy as indicated at Punta del Este in January (1962) that the penetration of this hemisphere by a Marxist-Leninist regime, backed from the outside, is unacceptable in the Hemisphere. As a matter of policy we must, I think, anticipate that these forces would be removed and that Cuba some day will rejoin the Hemisphere as a loyal part of it...So long as there is a Soviet military presence in Cuba, then this is an abnormal situation which will have to be a matter of great concern to the Hemisphere and to the United States.

Statement on December 12, 1962

Our impression is that there continues to be an outmovement of military personnel from Cuba, but this is not necessarily the end of the story on that particular point. Certainly we in this Hemisphere could

Withdrawal of Soviet Troops

could not accept as a normal situation any Soviet military presence in Cuba. ... The President did say on November 20 that ... certain of the troops in Cuba which were related to various functions in connection with offensive weapons would be withdrawn. But that was a very inexact indication from the other side, and so we will just have to wait and see ... The role (of Soviet combat forces in Cuba) ... is something of great concern to us and something we will follow very carefully.